



SUPPORTING SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS TO ACHIEVE

SHERRI YBARRA, SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Building Positive Relationships Between Parents and Schools

Cathy Thornton, SESTA

Associate Director of Statewide Operations

Melanie Reese, SDE

Dispute Resolution Coordinator



Most Parent and School Meetings are Friendly and Productive

- Everyone understand their roles and the goal
- Preparation is obvious
- Participants demonstrate respect and trust
- Discussions are on topic, meaningful, and predictable
- Progress is made within expected timeframes
- Differences of opinions are considered opportunities
- Relationships are nurtured as are goals achieved

However, some interactions are more unpredictable

- Tensions exist
- Emotions are high
- Agendas compete
- Trust is low
- Norms aren't followed
- Deep divisions in goals and understanding are present
- Personalities clash
- Outcomes are seen as competitions to be won or lost



What are our options in conflict?



Competition



Collaboration



Compromise



Accommodation



Avoidance⁴

What are our Style Choices in Conflict?



Accommodation:

The needs of the other are more important than my own needs on this issue.

Characteristics:

- Fast resolution
- May lack critical information
- Resentment at being low power
- May result in “gunny-sacking”
- May damage relationships

Act for the right reasons.

Don't put give in.



Make data driven
decisions.



Lessons from the Field

What are our Style Choices in Conflict?



Avoiding:

If I ignore this, it will go away – which is more important than either of us getting our needs met.

Characteristics:

- Resolution by default, if at all
- May lack critical information
- Avoidance may be interpreted as apathy
- Can result from lack of skill or knowledge
- Relationships are devalued overall

Lessons from the Field



What are our Style Choices in Conflict?



Competition:

My goal is to win and I don't care what you need on this issue.

Characteristics:

- Power is the primary strategy
- My solution over the “best” solution
- Competition is seen as aggressive
- Can result from lack of skill or knowledge
- Relationships are devalued overall

Lessons from the Field



What are our Style Choices in Conflict?



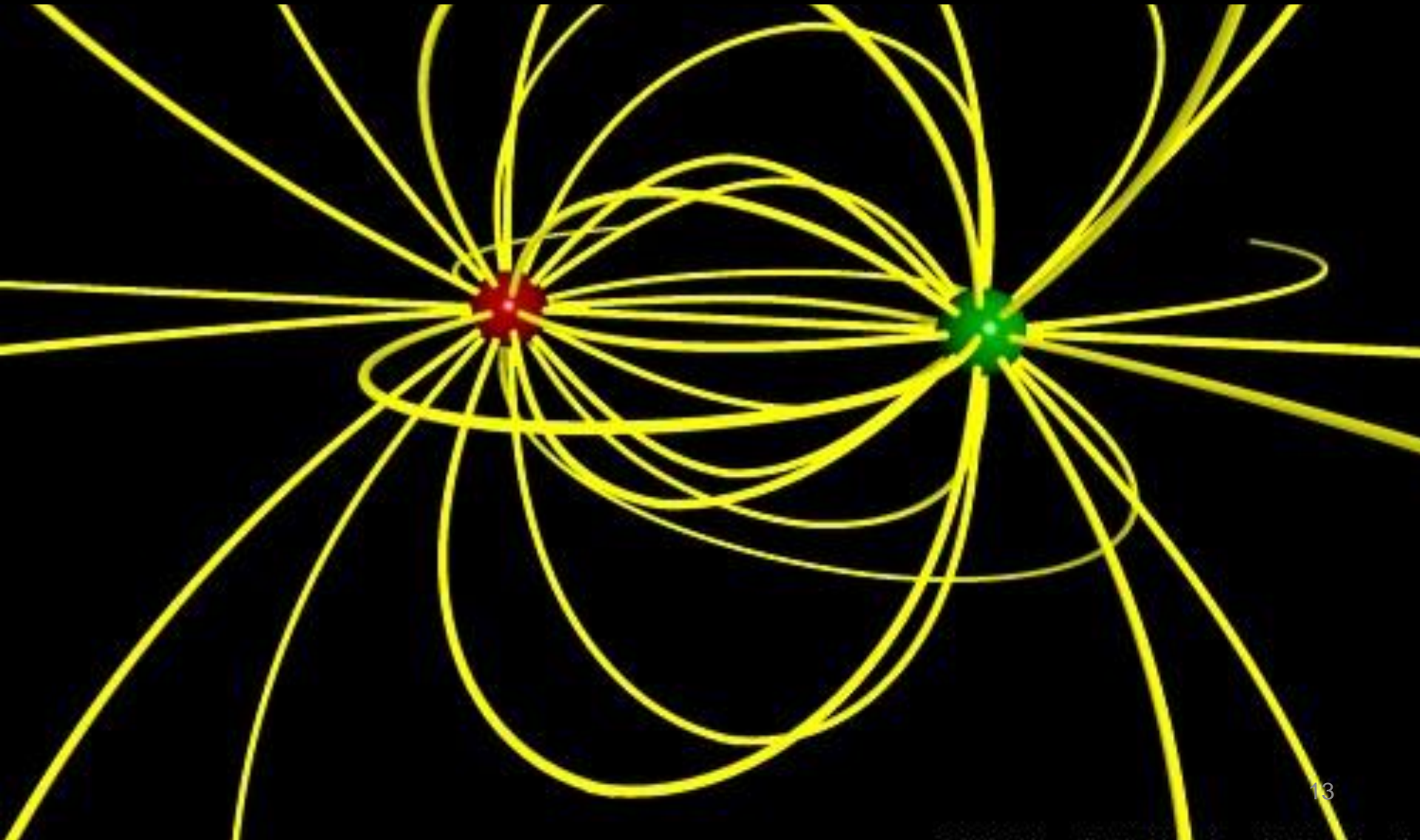
Compromise:

We'll split the difference, even if it doesn't meet our needs. What's important is you don't get everything and the conflict ends.

Characteristics:

- Often expedient
- May lack critical information
- Often born out of weariness
- Getting the conflict over with is more important than a good decision
- Leaves everyone a bit unhappy

Lessons from the Field



What are our Style Choices in Conflict?



Collaboration:

Take the time to identify needs and frame disagreements as joint problems to solve.

Characteristics:

- Takes longer
- Decisions are thoroughly vetted
- Builds relationships
- Higher satisfaction
- Creates norm of cooperation

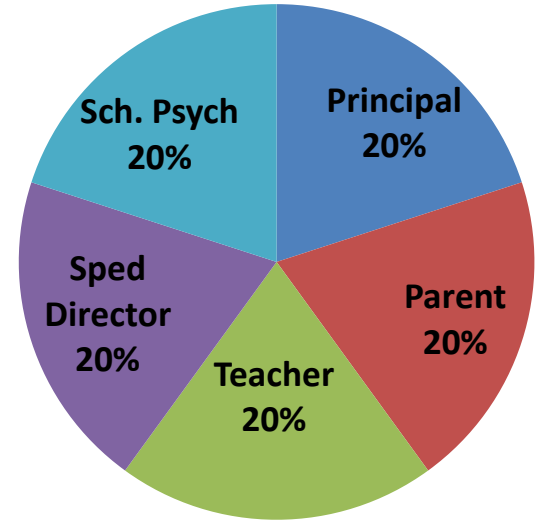
Collaboration Strategies

- Re-thinking Power
- Pre-meeting Activities
- Sharing information
- Building capacity
- Validating
- Follow-up Activities



Empower others.

How most people view power:



In conflict, this view leads to . . .



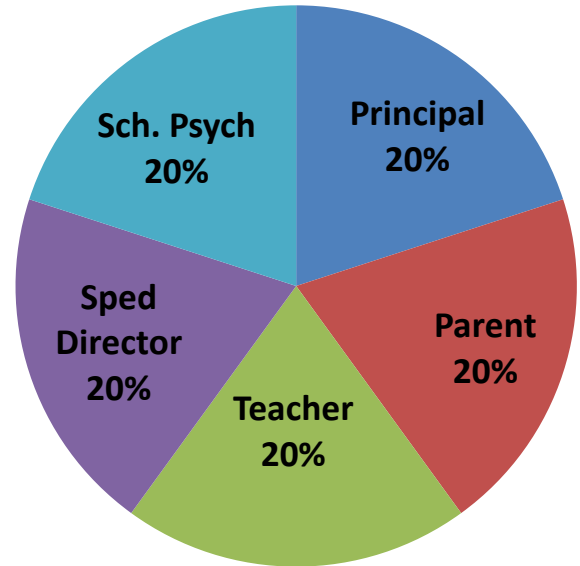
Power is part of relationships, always.

**If a person feels low power,
they'll try to get it.**

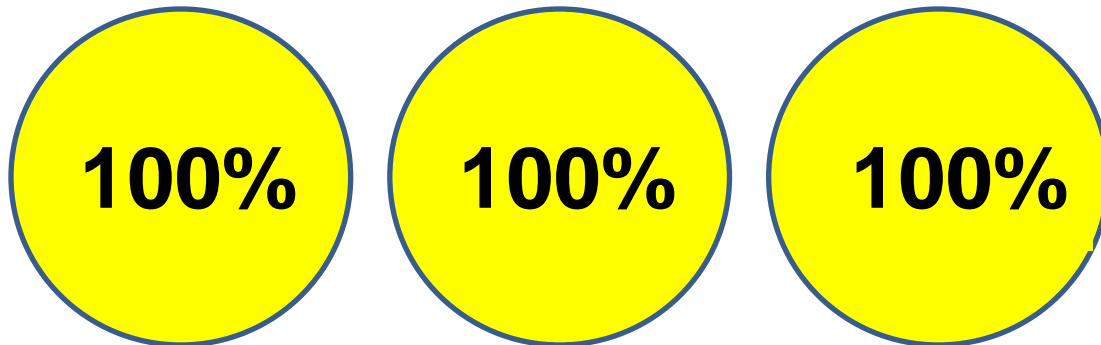


Re-thinking Power

Instead of a “Finite View” of Power



Encourage an
“Infinite View” of Power



Lessons from the Field



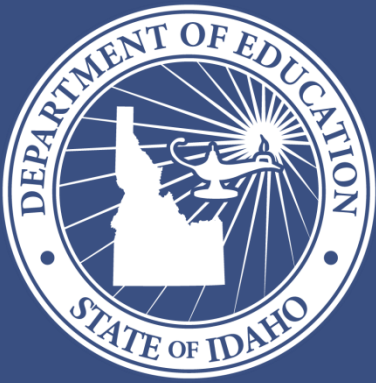
Build relationships.



- Every interaction is an opportunity.
- Share information and solicit feedback.
- At meetings, demonstrate gratitude.
- In introductions, share the role and value of that person's participation.
- Good relationships can frame conflicts as opportunities.

Questions?





SUPPORTING SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS TO ACHIEVE

SHERRI YBARRA, SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Idaho SESTA (Special Education Support and Technical Assistance)

Cathy Thornton, Associate Director of Statewide Operations

Phone: (208) 426-4853

Email: catherinethornton@boisestate.edu

SDE Dispute Resolution Office

Dr. Melanie Reese, Dispute Resolution Coordinator

Phone: (208) 332-6914

Email: mreese@sde.idaho.gov

DR Program Specialist: Jessica Spoja (208) 332-6912

SDE Special Education

Dr. Charlie Silva, Director

Phone: (208) 332-6806

Email: csilva@sde.idaho.gov